/68 cont'd/

4. Magic

754 The Miao have a kind of "black magic," which is intended to injure other people. If a man has a bad enemy, he requests a Taoist priest to avenge him through sorcery. The method is to write the enemy's name on a piece of paper, which is nailed up in a grove of trees. The enemy's soul is thus confined, and he will fall ill with a strange disease and slowly sink into a half-alive state. The only way the victim can be saved is to get hold of the sorceror and compel him to release the soul from imprisonment.

755 This was what I heard from the Miao. Whether this magic was really workable I still do not know. However, I once encountered a disabled man in the home of a Li headman. I was told that this disablement was due to the fact that when this man was a follower of a Li headman who had attacked the Miao, he had killed a great many people. For revenge, the Miao had confined his soul. Might this story be true!

5. Superstition

823 The Miao believe in feng-shui /Chinese system of geomancy/. When I was in Ang-chi village, Lu Tsun-ying, the chia-ch'ang, told me that the reason the Miao people there were so poor was because the feng-shui was not good there. He also pointed out how the feng-shui was poor. The mountain peaks were too sharp, there was a lack of springs, and the aspect was too narrow, so that there was nothing from which wealth could issue. His cousin, a pao-ch'ang, 756 also asked me whether I knew how to practice feng-shui. I gave him a negative answer. He said that he would save more money to enable him to engage a good master of feng-shui, who would find for him a place of prosperity.

787 They also believe in fortunetelling through horoscopes and the practice of physiognomy. While I was there a number of them asked me whether I knew how to read horoscopes and practice physiognomy. /69/ There are some aspects of their social life that have led the Miao to believe in such superstitions. We will discuss it in detail in the next chapter.

2: Ling & Ruey AE5 Miao AE5

756, 796

/For information on the part played by the sorcerer-priest (shaman) in Miao propitiation ceremonies, and a description of these ceremonies, see category 116, pp. 191-297./

/96 cont./

583 get busy with the bride's marriage portion. Most commonly it consists of one or two trunks, four or five garments making one outfit, two pairs of trousers, and a suit of clothes for the groom. [301] Such women's ornaments as earrings, rings, bracelets, and neck rings have been sent previously by the groom's family to the bride's, or silver is sent instead for the bride's family to have the ornaments made of it. On the day set the groom's 585 family send along wine, meat, firecrackers, incense and candles, and torches, and recently they include sedan chairs or chairs. When they arrive before the entrance of the bride's [177] family, recently, in imitation of the Chinese custom, they close the entrance and demand money for opening the gate in the sum of eight hundred cash or one string /one thousand/ of cash. Further, they intentionally curse the go-between and complain that the gifts of wine and meat sent by the boy's family are not enough. The bride then gets dressed up, and [756] [782] meanwhile a Miao sorcerer is invited to make sacrifices to the ancestors. A square table is laid with sacrificial items, incense [787] and candles, and the sorcerer priest recites incantations, kowtows, and performs divination with straws, to cut off the powers of evil. He lights two torches, opens a parasol, and invites the bride to come out to kowtow three times to the ancestral tablet. After this she kowtows once to her parents, once to all her brothers and paternal male cousins, and once to her maternal grandparents. This done, she turns around facing outside and [554] mounts the sedan chair (in a rich family) or walks (middle-class family), holding a half-opened parasol. The brothers, sisters, cousins, mother's married sisters, mother's brothers wives, and mother of the bride accompany her on the way. If the bride arrives too early at her husband's house, she has to wait in a side building or take a rest in a neighbor's house. At 585 that time a table is laid in front of the entrance with incense 782 and candles, a piece of cooked meat, and three cups of wine. [75] A guest sorcerer offers the following prayer:

[534] "The day is auspicious, the moment is opportune,
Heaven and earth open out.

/97 cont./

585 I am invoking the benignant spirits of union
782 To this mundane world.
539 The mission is none other than
To officiate at this marriage rite.
[776] We ask the Heaven Uniting Spirit,
The Earth Uniting Spirit,
The Year Uniting Spirit,
The Day Uniting Spirit,
The Hour Uniting Spirit,
The twelve uniting spirits and twelve uniting fairies,
Tung Wang Kung /Lord of the East, leader of the male immortals/
Hsi Wang Mu /Lady of the West, " " " female immortals/
[821] The Cowherd and the Weaving Girl /names of stars/
And the Old Immortal in the moon."

585 At this point he takes a cup of wine and a piece of meat,
[788] and writes out an incantation. After burning this he asks the
groom to drink half of the wine and to eat half of the meat,
[264] the rest being for the bride when she comes in. These are called
the uniting wine and the uniting meat. After the sorcerer priest
[756] has finished this performance, he sets off firecrackers and leads the bride into the house through a small side door. She sits down beside the fire pit, in which a huge fire has been started. The chair is placed slightly farther away for fear that the fire would give out too much heat. The chair cannot be pushed
[777] backward; it can only be pulled forward. The movement backward is recognized to be inauspicious; the forward movement then is auspicious. The sitting direction must be facing inside or in the direction of the ancestral tablet. After being seated she first washes her face with water. It has been boiled in a
[824] cooking pot with t'ung grass, pa-lun grass, and huang-mao grass, taken out and put in a basin, and incantations written
[756] and recited. While the bride is washing her face, the sorcerer priest sweeps with a broom several times behind her. After washing, she eats the meat and drinks the wine left by the groom.

/100 cont./
000 disaster.'" Volume 6 of Sung-t'ao Chih-li T'ing Chih /Gazeteer
764 of the Locally Administerial Sub-prefecture of Sung-t'ao (1834)/
[113] states: "When a Miao dies, the half corpse /?/ is laid to rest on the fire bed, near his feet are erected two poles which reach to the roof tiles. This is called 'ascending to heaven.' The
[765] body is then placed in a coffin. The mourning lasts for a
[554] month. The relatives by marriage offer condolences, the rich sending cattle and wine, the poor, wine and rice. The clothes left by the dead are stuffed into an effigy. Those gathered beat cymbals and drums, sing and dance in response to each other. This is called tiao ku /'tunes and drums'/. To divine
[787] the burial site they call on a Miao sorcerer. By throwing a
[752] chicken he divines whether a locality is auspicious or not. This
[768] is called 'chicken divination.' Some use a piece of wood cut into two halves, which is called 'wood divination.' After the burial, they bank up the earth into a long mound."

764 According to the funeral customs of the Miao today, when
782 a man dies, three chin and six liang of paper money are burned for him, which is called "money for scattering his breath." The ashes of the burned paper money are wrapped in a piece of white paper in a package and placed beside the dead body. A bowl of cooked rice with an egg on top, together with several yellow wheat stalks, is placed at the foot of the dead as a
764 sacrifice. Some calamus are picked in the woods and boiled in a panful of water. A person with a different surname is asked to wash the body of the dead with the water and to change his clothes. The size of the trouser girdles used depends upon the
[292] age of the deceased. For instance, if the dead man is 80, then his belt is made of 80 threads; if the dead man is 60, then 60 threads are used, and so on. /101/ After the burial clothes have been put on the body, two planks are put on two benches in the main room in the form of a bed, which is called liu ch'uang /"willow bed"/. The body is then placed on it, and a
[752] sacrificial table is set before it. A Miao sorcerer is asked to
[789] the house to perform the ritual. The sorcerer wields a sword of straw, from the handle of which a strip of white cloth dangles.

/101 cont./

756 The mourning son of the deceased, with a bamboo rice basket
764 hanging from his waist, and the sorcerer stand beside the body.
789 While the sorcerer utters spells, he points his straw sword in his right hand first toward the body of the deceased, then to the basket of the son, back and forth, until he has finished uttering the spells. With his left hand the son pulls the fingers of the dead, and with the right hand he scrapes these fingers with a thin slice of bamboo several times and then drops the bamboo into the basket. Meanwhile the priest continues his incantations. After the righthand fingers of the dead man have been scraped, his lefthand fingers are given the same treatment until the incantations are completed. After the Miao sorcerer finishes his performance, another guest sorcerer is invited to come chant a liturgy and "buy water." On the gate, in Chinese
[177] fashion, there is pasted a strip of white paper, on which are written the three characters Tang Ta Shih /"carrying out the important matter" — a parent's funeral/. Messengers are sent
763 to announce the death to clan members in distant places.
When the clan members receive the news and come to offer
764 condolences, there is no set ritual of condolence, but the family
606 of the daughter-in-law must give a pig's head, a piece of pork, a large jar of rice, as well as incense, candles, paper, and firecrackers. A son-in-law must give a pig, a goat, and a tableful of fish and meat dishes, called the "yang /earthly/ feast," and a tableful of simulated fish, meat, chicken, and duck made of flour, called the "yin /spirit world/ feast," together with a number of strings of cash incense, and candles.
764 Guests coming to offer condolences follow the same ceremony
[177] as the Chinese.

In the evening of the day that mourning ceremonies begin,
[606] first the pig and goat presented by the son-in-law are slaughtered
[782] and cooked and placed in a number of bowls, which are offered in sacrifice before the coffin. After the sacrificial ceremony, the distant paternal relatives /tsu hsiung-ti/ of the bereaved family are asked to come forward to take part in the drinking

/101 cont./

764 of wine, known to the Miao as "dark night /?/" /hsiao yeh/ to show that both hosts and guests feel grateful and in harmony. After the offering by the son-in-law, the maternal uncle of
764 the deceased, customarily called hou ch'in or hou pei /"empress'
604 relative" or "empress' generation"/ also comes forth with a
605 pig's head to offer in sacrifice. After this ceremony is over, he also invites the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family and those on the maternal side who came with the maternal uncle to drink together. After the wine has been drunk, one of the paternal male third cousins of the bereaved family or an eloquent elder of the village is asked to act as the go-between to request from the bereaved family huo-pa chiu /"torch wine"/. The huo-pa chiu consists of a certain number of chin of wine, a certain number of chin of meat, towels, and cloth. Those who go with the "empress' relative" each receive a towel and a certain number of ch'ih of cloth "for showing the way." The last item is necessary, but the others may be more or less given at discretion.

764 After the "empress' relative" has received the various
604 items of hou-pa chiu, he is charged with certain duties at the time of carrying the corpse to the grave. Before the procession he has to wrap the white cloth received over his body, wrap his head with a white towel and hold a straw sword with a white towel dangling from the handle. He has to stand before the coffin or before the main entrance, uttering several phrases of
[789] a magic formula, and then with the straw sword /102/ he knocks three times on the entrance, whereupon the procession can start off. Holding a fire stick in his hand, the sorcerer
● [754] picks up the lamp bowl from under the coffin and places it upside down on the coffin, and after uttering spells, he shatters the bowl with the fire stick, and everyone immediately carries the coffin out the entrance. The "empress' relative" still wrapped in white cloth, a white towel on his head, holding a straw sword in his left hand and a torch in his right, marches in front of the coffin, and goes first, leading the way. The filial son in mourning and the mourners march, men before the

/102 cont./

764 coffin and the women behind it. The people who carry the
604 coffin while on the way ask the deceased's son-in-law for wine
[606] to drink, without which they would not proceed. Arriving at the burial ground the "empress' relative" throws down the torch on the grave, and returns the grass sword to the host. The grave pit has already been dug by men sent ahead. Now they burn
[372] oiled hemp stalks, which is called "warming up the grave."
764 A geomancer is on hand to mark out the eight diagrams /used
787 in Chinese system of divination/ with rice at the bottom of the
[791] grave, and a cock is let down into the pit to peck at the rice,
[177] in order to divine the good and bad luck of the host's family. If the cock eats the rice on the left side, then the male members will have good luck, if on the right side, then the female members will have peace. If it eats in the center then both men and women will have luck. After the coffin is laid in the
764 pit, the geomancer, holding a sheng of white, polished rice,
791 stands at the head of the coffin and scatters the rice, making complimentary remarks. The mourning filial son and others kneel at the foot of the coffin, catch the rice in their clothes. After the burial, the geomancer holds a flat, called the "calling-back-the-soul flag," and leads the procession back, and when
[774] they arrive at the bereaved family's house, everyone puts a few grains of cooked rice in the mouth to avoid losing the soul.
764 The sorcerer, carrying a bamboo tube full of water, stands at
●756 the junction of crossroads or at the main entrance and scatters water with a broom made of green grass, uttering spells, to get rid of the tainted air and to dispel evil spirits.

765 After returning from the grave and attending to the dispersal of all the relatives and friends from everywhere, the host then must provide a feast for the "torch wine and meat" men brought along by the "empress' relative." If after they have eaten again and again, the hospitality is still inadequate, often it may cause "other shoots to sprout /i.e. troubles/." and cause
[605] trouble for the host. After the meal, the paternal third cousin
[604] /?/ departs, but the "empress' relative" himself remains.

/102 cont./

765 After the funeral, on the day of Mao /of the traditional
756 calendar/, the bereaved family invites a sorcerer to the house
[787 to offer sacrifices to the deceased. A table is set, on which
are laid bowls of meat and cups of wine. The sorcerer burns
yellow wax, beats bamboo tubes, and utters spells. When the
[787 sorcerer's hands suddenly begin to shake without stopping, the
members of the family think that the deceased has come back,
and they all burst out in loud weeping. In the fifth night watch
765 they offer mi-pa to the honorable deceased, which somewhat
[782 resembles the Chinese custom of hui sha /"warding off noxious
177 influences"/. After this the maternal uncle about to depart,
604 ask the host family for personalthings left, such as the deceased's
768 clothes, shoes, socks, and bed sheets. If the dead person was
a woman, he asks for the marriage portion and the amount
received depends upon the financial condition of the host
family.

766 From very early times the Miao have had tribes but not
756 tribal chiefs, and therefore they do not have different classes
565 nor differentiated marriage or funeral ceremonial customs.
The funeral for a Miao sorcerer, however, is slightly different
from that for the ordinary person. When a sorcerer is at the
point of death, /103/ two other sorcerer priests are summoned
to the house. When he breathes his last, the members of the
family must not weep. One sorcerer priest climbs on the house
and removes a few tiles from it to make an opening, which
is called "opening the heaven's gate." The other sorcerer
priest sits below behind the deceased, and as soon as he sees
"heaven's gate" has been opened, he immediately lets out a
loud cry, to which the one on the roof responds with another
cry, and thus, the two men, one above and the other below,
start their ritual. It is said that the one above opens heaven's
gate, and the one below shuts the grove /literally, "earth
storehouse"/. This is to cause the departed sorcerer not to
enter hell but to ascend to heaven. After this the family mem-
bers may begin to cry and weep.

/103 cont./

766 On the day of the funeral procession, some seven, eight,
756 or ten, and sometimes as many as 20 or 30, sorcerer priests are invited. Each holds his particular sorcerer's banner and cymbals and drums, with a large entourage following. Therefore, the funeral procession of a sorcerer in the Miao area is an exciting affair well worth watching. It is said that when the
[775] deceased sorcerer priest ascends to heaven, on the way he has to pass through five garrisons and four outposts. Along the way the other sorcerer priests are expected to act as the vanguard, hence the more sorcerer priests present the stronger the force. Each sorcerer priest has to go to the grave before he can withdraw his "soldiers" and lower his banner to return home.

765 As for Miao mourning garments, when a father dies, a
[292] white headband is worn, with two streamers trailing behind before the burial has yet taken place. If both parents are dead, then the two streamers reach to the ground, otherwise only one ribbon does. Within a period of four months the mourner should not lift a hoe or a machete for at least one month; he
[302] does not shave his head, he does not sing, he wears mourning clothes for three years. In the case of a mother's death, the white cloth headband with which the head is wrapped is not washed for four months, during which period the mourner does
[302] not shave his head nor drink cold water, and the mourning clothes are worn for four years. There are persons who wear mourning for their deceased parents all their lives up to 50 or 60 years. Mourning clothes for paternal grandparents are worn for 12 days, and for a maternal uncle or his wife 12 days also. For a deceased son the mother wears a red streamer on her headband for three days.

/128 cont./ In recent years,
177 Chinese magical practices have been transmitted into the Miao
771 frontier region, and the Miao also believe in the Chinese shen.
Hence, today there are two kinds of religion in the Miao region.
(1) the Miao religion and (2) the guest religion. (1) Each of

[648]

1. The Miao call the Chinese "guests" and so call the religion transmitted by the Chinese the "guest religion."

these religions has its own sphere and does not conflict with the other in influence, for both are based on animism so they can exist together.

●756 The Miao religion and the guest religion each has its own
[177] sorcerer-priests. The Miao sorcerer [pay tɛy ɕioŋy] is commonly called the Miao lao-shih /"teacher"/, and the guest sorcerer [pay tɛy tʂay] called the guest lao-shih.

When the Miao lao-shih performs a minor ritual, for the most part he wears ordinary dress. Only when performing im-
[292] portant sacrificial ceremonies, such as Eating Pigs and Bludgeoning the Ox, do they wear caps and long gowns. His paraphernalia include a bowl of beeswax, a hand bell, a bamboo tube, a short double-edged sword, as well as paper banners and a paper parasol. The guest lao-shih wears a spirit /shen/ hat and a
752 spirit long gown when he presides over important rituals.
177 His paraphernalia include an ox horn, a ritual /"teacher's"/
[295] sword, and a willow kerchief. Both the Miao and the guest sorcerer-priests only perform religious ceremonies. For com-
177 munication with the kuei and shen, for instance to find out, in
791 case of sickness, which kuei is causing the trouble, /129/ and
787 then they have in addition a woman or man magician /lit. "fairies"/ who can travel to the yin world to find out. In
[755] addition, there are diviners to find out about good and ill
*[782] fortune in affairs. To calculate the day of getting sick and to select the date for sacrifice to the kuei, there are the date setters. Except for the Miao lao-shih, the rest of the above-

1 [For an extended discussion of the "guest religion", see category 116, pp237-297- ANALYST]

[26 cont.]

774 ghost, the sand-throwing ghost [27], the shadow ghost, the half-
776 way ghost, the ghost of pestilence, the soul-infatuating ghost, the passing ghost, the four-path Buddha-ghost, the idle ghost, the short-legged ghost and the wall ghost. Among all these ghosts the thunder spirit and the tiger ghost are the most wicked and the most awesome. This belief is evidently influenced by geographic environments. Living in high precipitous mountains under primitive conditions, these people cannot help being struck with fear each time thunder roars and lightning flashes. Furthermore, in the thick and deep forests, fierce animals inspire additional awe in them. All these objects being so terrible in their physical form; their spirit form must be even more mysterious and frightening. Another point worthy of notice is the fact that the
777 gods they worship are greatly influenced by the Chinese. For
776 instance, the Jade Emperor, the Bodhisattva of Mercy, Kwan-ti and Yo Fei are not native gods of the Hê Miao. The tablet of Shen-nung erected by farmers next to their ancestral tablets, the God of Wealth worshipped by merchants, Lo Pan [a clever artisan of the spring and autumn period] worshipped by artisans, T'ai-shang lao-chün [title of Laotzu, here considered as a supreme Taoist god] worshipped by blacksmiths, Lei-tsu [traditionally, wife of the yellow emperor and originator of sericulture] worshipped by weavers -- all these come from Chinese sources.

756 In their intercourse with the spirits they need a medium, who is the shaman or wizard. The position of the priest among the Short-skirt Hê Miao is not hereditary, and politically and socially it does not command any special respect and authority. Anyone who feels that a spirit has seized hold of him becomes spiritually possessed and may proclaim himself a shaman. After this proclamation he would be professionally approached. There is no limitation of age for the priest. Some women too assume the role of a shaman, but they are comparatively rare. An ordinary village would have at least one priest, and a larger village, two or three. The duties of a priest may be enumerated as follows:

755-
756 1) To attend to sickness. In the eyes of primitive peoples,

[27 cont.]

756 755 all diseases are caused by evil spirits, and to expel them is to rid oneself of the diseases. In case of slight indisposition one's family members would burn incense and paper to drive away the wild ghost. But in case of serious sickness [28] the evil workings of an important ghost are presumed and it is necessary to get hold of a priest to slaughter an animal and to employ magic in order to achieve the desired end.

756 842 2) To pray for a son. If man is without a child at the age of forty-three or forty-four he can ask a priest to appeal to the Jade Emperor for a son (the Miao do not believe in the Son-awarding Bodhisattva), or to enter the mountain to pray to a huge rock, the spirit of which is said to be able to award a child. So, in the second and the tenth month, incense is burned continuously to the rock spirit. At the time of worship two bowls of glutinous rice, five or six sticks of red incense, eight to sixteen fish as well as candles and paper money are used.

756 774 [787] 3) To arrest the soul. If a person is pale, thin and dispirited or overtaken by serious sickness without being able to get up, the conclusion is that it is an omen of the impending departure of the soul. A priest is engaged to appear before Yen-wang (the king of Hades) to arrest the soul and bring it back. In so doing, it is necessary to slaughter a pig for sacrifice before Yen-wang. After the soul is arrested all the relatives contribute from ten or twenty cents to a dollar or two toward a fund for the making of a necklace or a bracelet, called respectively the life-preserving chain or the hundred-family lock, for wear by the stricken person. At the same time a string of bamboo rings is hung crosswise at the gate together with a piece of charm to indicate that the soul is locked in and prevented from escaping again. Sometimes, a bad harvest is also attributed to the disappearance of the soul, and the priest is asked to slaughter a duck to summon it back.

756 [787] 4) To arrest the ghost. In cooking rice, when the pan shrieks, or when the bucket in which the rice is steamed issues a shrilling sound, it indicates the presence of a ghost. The priest is asked to slaughter a cow for sacrifice, because this ghost is the thunder demon, the greatest of all ghosts, and to

[28 cont.]
756 appease him a whole cow has to be sacrificed.

5) To rectify an injustice. If A has received injustice in
754 the hands of B and is so oppressed that he has no means of appeal,
627 he may ask a priest to present a petition in the nether world. The priest can invoke a kind of "calamity ghost" to visit B, and if the latter is still ruthless and stubborn, this ghost can bring about death to all the members of his family, including the animals. To enlist the help of the "calamity ghost," it is necessary to give him a big crab, several river worms, a cock, and a male dog. The dog may be killed, but the cock may not be killed -- it can only be cursed to death by the priest. The crab and the river worms are put in a jar to be buried far away, [29] even in the bottom of a river, to prevent others from digging it up. It is said that in two or three days calamity is sure to befall B's family. If the latter knows about this, a priest should immediately be engaged to divine from the magic diagrams. Only when the buried items are unearthed can the calamity be averted.

6) To prolong life. A priest can tell whether a person's
761 life will be short-lived and he can apply for an extension for
782 him. In the process the priest has to slaughter a male pig and
756 proceed before Yen-wang to beg for more life for the applicant. When this is granted, another pig is slaughtered to be sacrificed together with wine, glutinous rice and a carp as an expression of gratitude to Yen-wang.

7) To tell fortune. When someone does not know how to
787 act in times of crisis, a priest is asked to make a decision.
756 Important matters such as choosing a trade or a profession, and trifles such as selecting materials for a garment, all require the decision of the priest, who will attempt to put the inquirer's mind in place. The average person respects the words of the priest. Sometimes when the priest decides that it will be very unlucky for a certain person to leave the village, that person may spend the rest of his life at home without going outside the village gate.

8) To protect children. Many families whose children
756 are susceptible to frequent illness would ask the priest to be their
751

[29 cont.]

751 "guardian" for the purpose of getting protection. This is be-
756 cause the body of the priest is supposed to be endowed with a spiritual quality that can put the ghosts in their places. Therefore, children receiving his guardianship can avoid illness. Often a priest may have several hundred people under his protection. To apply for it the protégé has to present a pair of shoes, a handkerchief, a cock and some glutinous rice to the
[553] guiding spirit of the priest, after which offering the protégé is given a new name.

Priesthood among the Short-skirt Hē Miao is not a profes-
756 sion, the shaman being a full-time farmer, carpenter or blacksmith. It is only a side-line. Each time the priest performs some service, his remuneration consists of a few insignificant "lucky" items. It is said that priesthood is not a willing choice. Every priest has at least twenty to thirty different spirits seeking his mediumship, and if he refuses the spirits would derange his mind. So once seized by the spirits a man cannot help being a priest. He then cuts a piece of red paper into a row of human forms [30] and pastes them before his ancestral altar. A board is nailed horizontally against the wall, on which two or three tea cups are placed. After each magic performance, the head of
[742] the cow, pig, or dog used in the ritual must be brought home to be sacrificed before the altar. But chickens and ducks used for the same purpose need not be brought home.

The capability of the shamans varies. Some can only catch small or wild ghosts but are unable to subdue big and fierce ghosts, who only surrender to priests with greater supernatural powers. Therefore, priests are divided into several classes. While performing magic, the priest may be assisted by a t'ung-shih [instructor] who is a less spiritually gifted person. The latter can only assist the priest but cannot engage the ghosts alone, and so his remuneration is still less. He may be fed for the services rendered without extra rewards.

c) Family Units

A M 614 [764] Neither among the Meau nor among the Akha do the sibs /Sippen/ live locally separated or have their own totems. On the other hand, the Akha have their own burial places, but the Meau do not. Likewise among the two peoples there are no religious sib-celebrations or common insignia or individual sib-heads. The unit is not the sib, but the large /extended/ family /Grossfamilie/, which lives in one house and consists of the head of the family, his unmarried sons and daughters, and, among the Meau, the married sons up to the end of their thirtieth year and their families.

A M 596

The rights of the head of a large family are very extensive. All those living in the house, wives, children, and grandchildren, must obey him; he has unlimited authority, and he may punish, beat, or, among the Meau, in special cases even kill the members of the household under him. This is not the case among the Akha, among whom only twins are killed (cf. the chapter, "Life in the Community," section on "Birth"). Otherwise, however, the head of the large family, who is responsible for the well-being of all the others, irrevocably decides all the disputes within his household community.

In view of the proverbial compatibility of the members of a Meau family, the head of such a large family hardly ever has occasion actually to interfere, but on the other hand, he often does among the Akha. Among the Meau I repeatedly observed that the head did not make a decision without first consulting with the sons who lived under his roof. There was never a decision against the will of the subordinate concerned. The sons, too, however, avoided expressing their opinion until after they had conferred with the head of the large family. In such cases I was always given the answer: "This is not our business; we must first ask the father."

A M [769] [756] It is the duty of the head to officiate and offer the sacrifices in connection with the religious festivals of the large family, namely, the festivals for the dead or the veneration of the ancestors. If especially important affairs are involved, for instance, if measures have to be taken in connection with the

A M 596 ● 756 /35 cont./ outbreak of serious /36/ illness, it is his business to have the shaman summoned and then to play the role of assistant in his performances.

d) Age Classes, Clans, Secret Societies, Rank Organization

A M 571 114 614 Secret societies and clubs, as well as age-class organizations are unknown among both peoples. Neither among the Meau nor among the Akha did I find any indication of the existence of a clan /Klan/ system or of individual clans. Nevertheless, ancient Chinese sources often mention clans among the various Meau tribes (1). Also in the works of French

1. Eberhard, II, p. 274.

authors the term comes up occasionally. In the latter cases one can easily see that the authors confuse clan and sib, that is, they use the term "clan" in place of "sib." Possibly the Chinese authors also use "clan" in a different sense than it is used in German ethnography. There are no guilds, organizations of merchants or craftsmen, ranks, castes, or nobility.

M 592 [736] Among the Meau, in addition to the free there are also the unfree, who, however, are not to be confused with slaves. In the case of the unfree, it is rather a matter of Meau who are alone, whose relatives have died as a consequence of war, sickness, or old age, and who, having grown up within the unit of the large family, now have no possibility of enduring the struggle for existence as solitary individuals. In the forests of Farther India the isolated individual is not equal to the struggle for existence. The larger the community, the easier is the struggle for survival. The Meau is well aware of this fact and M [842] strives at all costs to enlarge the community. Thus it is the self-evident aim of the Meau to have as many children as M [737] possible, and he demands ten children and more from each of his wives! Despite the great fertility, however, there are

/72 cont./

881 The menstruating Meau girl is ashamed and tries to find out from her mother whether she is ill; she is also reticent about talking with other adults. The mother explains the facts of life to the girl, unless this has already been done by older playmates, as is usually the case. Boys naturally turn to their fathers with questions about sex.

[157] Girls as well as boys at the time of puberty become introspective, often seem absent-minded, and gradually withdraw more and more from the children's group, for which they have less and less time since they are put to work to an increasing extent. At the beginning of this period the adolescents avoid [572] the other sex; friendships between those of the same sex arise instead. The adolescents often develop an extravagant attachment to older persons of the same sex.

[774] This behavior, especially the apparent absent-mindedness, [756] disturbs the parents. Soon it is said that the soul has left the body and that evil spirits prevent it from returning. One sends for the [755] shaman, who begins his conjurations. /Ill. 18-21 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /73/ which make an extremely strong impression upon the adolescents.

887 Very soon, however, their attitude changes and strikes 836 out in the opposite direction. The pubescent Meau then seeks contacts with the other sex; they tend to stay away from members of their own sex, but especially from the younger children, and attach themselves to adults. It is not long before the girl, prompted by the older boys, begins an open flirtation, which usually leads to sexual surrender. The pubescent boys also seek sexual intercourse and approach the older, still unmarried girls, but never married women (see the section, "Courtship and Betrothal," in this chapter). They follow the older boys on their pursuit of girls and try to watch them and it is not long before they, too, are experienced in all phases of love-making (see the section, "Sexual Development," in this chapter).

883 The pubescent Meau begin to pay attention to cleanli- [515] ness and wash themselves several times a month. They think a great deal about their future. They picture their home,

[Text continues on p. 112]

/147/

534 [171] Sounding stones, sounding sticks, slit drums, xylophones of any kind, rattles, or whirring instruments are found just as little as stringed instruments, which play an important role among the Thai peoples living in the valley. Similarly there are no instruments that could be [202] used for communication over great distances. On the other [177] hand, hide drums, presumably of Chinese or Laotian origin, as well as small bronze gongs (Fig. 30), which, along with [75] rattles (Fig. 31) are used by the shamans, are occasionally [796] found. Both instruments, like the mouth organs, are ceremonial paraphernalia which are heard during the death and sacrificial ceremonies, /Figs. 30 and 31 appear here/ as well as at the spirit-questioning, the driving out of evil spirits, and, finally, during the New Year's celebration. Only the bronze gong also finds use as an alarm device.

[202]

28 29

Fig. 28-29.
Vibrating flute of the Meau. 1/9 nat. size. Fig. 28, from above. Fig. 29, side view and blow-hole.

533 Each class of the instruments named is always used by itself; combining different instruments into an orchestra is unknown. Every Meau has a mastery of all the instruments, even though not always as a virtuoso, but there are real masters among them, although no professional musicians. 231 Draft cattle and horses often have bells hanging on them. 534 There are bamboo bells (Fig. 32), whose central piece of 177 bamboo acts as the resonance chamber. To the left and right of it, in two fork-shaped pieces of bamboo, hang clappers of the same material, which strike the resonance

/164 cont./

776 other cultivated land are exceptions (see the section, "Cult and Taboo," in this chapter). According to my investigations, there are in general no absolutely evil or primarily good spirits, that is to say, /165/ certain individual spirits are not regarded as representatives of evil and others as those of good. Rather, each spirit is regarded as neutral. If, however, one disturbs a spirit in his dwelling, either by cutting down the tree that represents his abode or by soiling his abode, which he finds especially unbearable if the soiling were by defecation, he becomes angry and takes his revenge on the person or persons. Only through this is the originally neutral spirit, klaň yun, transformed into an evil one, which is then called nyǒhň. In such [782] [756] cases one tries to ascertain whether he has actually offended a spirit and strives to propitiate it. In certain cases, the help of the shaman is required, which I shall discuss in greater detail.

[774] The spirits have no connection with the souls, except in the case already described, whereby a soul, through the influence of an evil spirit, becomes an evil spirit itself through its transformation into a tiger. All the spirits are invisible and can only be seen in dreams by the soul of the sleeper. They are male or female in sex, immortal, and otherwise live like human beings. They marry, have children, and cultivate rice and other products of the fields. They are particularly fond of [241] [782] visiting the rice fields of human beings, and in such a case these obviously "evil" spirits must be chased away quickly with the help of the ancestors, and the "good" spirits have to be asked to lend their assistance for the growth and increase of field products, for which a sacrifice of chickens and alcohol is promised.

All the spirits look like human beings and seem to be [177] dressed accordingly. I was told that the evil spirits wore Chinese and Thailand military uniforms!

Besides these general spirits, so to speak, there are others to which definite characteristics and activities are attributed. [726] Some spirits, for instance, have a special liking for war. One turns to them when victory for a military campaign is desired. [326] Similarly, before a Meau works at a forge, he turns to the three

/165 cont./

326 776 spirits of the smithy, the chief spirit, dă lŭ pán, which literally means "to know great fire," and his two assistant spirits, lŭ lŭ pan and san lu pan, and asks these three spirits to help him and to see to it that the iron neither cracks nor becomes overheated. Da lu pan, the chief spirit of the smithy spirits, also taught the Meau /166/ other useful things, especially technical skills. These spirits of the smithy are of the male sex. The smiths [782] make sacrifices to them on the altar in their houses and believe that they actually live there. Before the Meau begins his work at the forge, he lights an incense candle for each of the three spirits, that is, three candles altogether, and asks dă lŭ pán and his two assistant spirits to follow him to the smithy. After that it is believed that the three spirits actually accompany the smith to the workshop and return to the dwelling after the work is done. No explanation could be given when I objected that there must be vast numbers of such spirits, since there are many Meau smiths and dă lŭ pán with his two assistant spirits lives in the house of every one of them.

• 756 776 [782] The teacher-spirit of the medicine man is called yŭ wăn sŭ fū. The curer makes offerings to him, with whom no assistant spirits are associated, on the altar which he has erected in his house, before he begins to treat a sick person. Two incense candles are lighted for this sacrificial act.

The shamans, too, follow a teacher-spirit, kŏ nŏ kŏ tsū. They are also helped by three pairs of assistant spirits: tă fŭ yé, lŭ fŭ yé, and săn fŭ yé.

776 [782] [212] Other good spirits live in the clouds. Human beings do not know how many of them, who are called sẹn šẹn, there are. In one Meau village I met a woman who was convinced that she had the special good-will of these cloud spirits, for which reason she had erected in her house a special altar for them, on which she regularly offered sacrifices to the sẹn šẹn. This woman believed that the cloud spirits had taught her to write! How easy it was to determine that she had seen Chinese characters among itinerant Haw traders. Upon my request she scribbled on paper fanciful characters, whose meaning, of course, she was unable to explain to me.

/166 cont./

776 825 [372] [626] [171] The spirit of fire is called tă hŏ lŭ pín. It is his function to take care of the fire. He would feel offended if one were to step over a fire, and he would take revenge in such a case by sending a tiger that would devour the perpetrator. Telford (1)

Page 133.

reports that the Meau and the Yau in western China, in the region of Tschieng /167/ Hung in Yunnan, believe in a bush spirit, Pe Tum Moi. Anyone who goes into the bush, especially to fetch water or firewood, has to be wary of him, because in the daytime this spirit changes into a frog, which, if it is put in a cage, disappears during the night. It is said that Pe Tum Moi commonly appears to human beings in the shape of a tiger that devours men and horses.

776 [844] I discovered a pair of spirits that appear only at the birth of a child. Corresponding to the fact that this pair only has a joint effect, it also has only a joint name: me yén.

[778] [756] The spirit sŭ kăn is able to increase money and property. Many Meau and all shamans erect a small altar for him in their houses. In addition to the helpful spirits already mentioned, there are a great many of them for the most varied spheres. What superhuman capacities these spirits have over and above the familiar activity, however, is unknown to the people. Individual spirits for individual persons are in any case in the minority, and there are no tutelary spirits that have to attend to a single person, so to speak.

[753] Lajonquière (1) writes of "evil spirits that may enter the

II, p. 313.

human body in order to cause sickness. They live in the interior of the earth. They are the souls of the beheaded or of the unburied dead." In Thailand I was unable to find confirmation of [177] [829] this conception, which can probably be traced back to Chinese influence. I discovered in general that the Meau in Thailand

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/175 cont./

A 776 532 842 All these spirits are invisible, and there are no images of them. The situation is different with regard to the wooden figures standing next to each entrance gate to an Akha village and typically recognizable as male and female (Ill. 45), which, according to Telford (3), are called "Hkow De," the female, and

3. Page 101.

"Bvuh Je," the male figure. They are regarded as fertility deities of a sort, who see to a blessing of many children for the women and are often represented in the act of copulation. /176/ One also turns to them when a woman has a difficult confinement. A [845] Water is then poured over the two figures, caught in vessels, and given to the woman in labor to drink, a custom which is also confirmed by Telford (1).

1. Page 102.

A 177 [776] As among the Meau, among the Akha, too, no attention is paid to the deities of other peoples or tribes. However, whereas among the Meau relatively little has been borrowed from other religions, there are elements among the Akha, such as the previously mentioned swing, which point to foreign influences. Among these, presumably, are the wooden swords and arrows of the Akha children, which may go back to Chinese influence.

c) Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens

M 756 787 The Meau believe that there are human beings whose supernatural faculties permit them to have more intimate relations with the spirits than is possible for ordinary human beings. The shamans, called ǒă nĭn, are such human beings, who sometimes are even more powerful than certain spirits. The supernatural powers come about from a spirit's having entered the body of a person without his co-operation. Through this the human being acquires the ability to see spirits even in the waking state and to associate with them. Furthermore he now has knowledge that ordinary human beings do not have. Accordingly, these abilities

1 [See cat 116, p297 - ANALYST]

/176 cont./

[756] [787] and this knowledge are not acquired through learning; the office of the shaman is not even necessarily handed down from father to son, though this is possible, but primarily the shaman is a person who has been chosen by the spirits. Usually each village has several shamans, who, it is assumed, are not equally powerful. [554] Their rating depends on the successes accomplished by the individual shamans. A person may turn to one in less important cases and to another in more important cases or if the first shaman has failed.

[562] [554] Similarly, the position of the shaman does not depend on the sex, although female shamans are much rarer than male ones. Both male and female shamans, when they are not engaged in their special activities, live /Color Pl. II appears here on an unnumbered page/ /177/ exactly like the other members of the tribe, from whom, if they are men, they are in no way distinguished, except for a small distinguishing mark (Fig. 40). The [302] female shamans are recognizable only by their hair style; they do not wear the long hair of the women, but have the head either close-cropped or wear the male hair-style, depending on the instructions given to them by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

The latter also determines the color of the distinguishing [292] mark of the shamans, a small fabric cross that is sewed on the back of the blouse and is worn only while a ceremony is being performed. /Fig. 40 appears here./ Sometimes small silver coins, usually of Chinese origin, are sewed in two or four ends of the fabric cross. This, too, would have been ordered by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

428 756 787 [782] [776] [801] If a shaman is about to die and wants to designate one of his sons as his successor, this is done in ceremonial fashion. He sacrifices four candles and four small bowls of tea to the teacher-spirit of all the shamans, kŏ nŏ kŏ tsŭ, and the three pairs of assistant spirits, tă fŭ yé, lŭ fŭ yé, and săn fŭ yé. The teacher-spirit and each pair of assistants are entitled to one candle and one bowl; moreover, four is the lucky number of the Meau. Now the gongs are beaten and the magic rattle is sounded until the shaman believes that the spirits are present. He now asks them to lend their assistance to his son, whose name he mentions, just as they have to him during his years of activity, for he himself is now too old to continue to perform his duties.

/177 cont./

428 The young shaman chosen by his father does not have to
●756 go through any kind of preparatory period or apprenticeship. This is actually unnecessary since his abilities depend on the will of the spirits, and the duties of a shaman have been familiar to him since childhood through his observation of his father's activities.

756 It is the task of the shaman to learn the
787 wishes of the ancestors and spirits and to make
[775] them known to human beings. The shaman, however, can call on not only the ancestors, but also the souls of dead strangers. Through them he receives information with which he may, for instance, clear up a crime. On the other hand, he cannot induce them to change their dwellings /178/ or influence them in any other way. It is also im-
756 possible for the shaman to bewitch human
[754] beings or to do other evil deeds by means of his supernatural
[789] powers, just as he cannot influence the weather. On the other hand, in addition to other duties which will be discussed below, the shaman has the task of driving away evil spirits that make the houses and fields of human beings unsafe or those by whom human beings are possessed.

Fig. 40 Fabric cross of the Meau. 1/15 nat. size. Worn sewed on the back of the jacket of the shamans.

756 Exorcism is practiced with very simple means. Since the
755 spirits always have a special liking or dislike for certain colors,
789 the shaman ascertains, after an appropriate ceremony, which
[822] color in particular the spirit that possesses a human being rejects. Accordingly he has a cross of black, white, or red cloth sewed on the back of the clothes of the one possessed, since these are the colors that come under consideration. In the long run the spirit is unable to bear the odious color and seeks another abode, whereupon the one possessed is cured.

There is still another method of spirit-exorcism. The one
[787] possessed must sit down on the ground, and the shaman conjures
[778] his teacher-spirit, the ancestors, and the three pairs of assistant spirits. Then he commands the evil spirit to leave the body of the sick person, over whose head he clashes together the magic

/178 cont./

●756 wooden swords (Figs. 53 and 54).[1] Usually the desired effect takes
755 place immediately, the Meau believe. If the wooden swords
789 should not prove to be effective enough, one makes use of swords
[778] of iron or bronze (Fig. 55).[1] Thereupon the evil spirits are said to leave the human being immediately.

756 The conjuration of the teacher-spirit and the assistant
787 spirits takes place as follows: the shaman invokes his teacher-spirit and beseeches him to appear with his three pairs of assistant spirits, whereupon he is convinced that they all enter into him. Next he places four incense candles, one each for the teacher-spirit and the three pairs of assistants, on the
[782] altar of the house and lights them. Four small bowls of tea as a sacrifice are put beside the candles. Then the shaman sits down in front of the altar, either on the ground or on a bench
[534] placed there. Now he strikes the magic rattle, which he holds in his left hand, rhythmically against his knees and moves his upper body forward and /179/ backward, while those men at whose request the conjuration is being performed slowly and steadily beat on small bronze gongs. After these preparations have been made, the shaman begins his conjuration and asks the spirit to appear and to enter his body. As soon as this has taken place, he falls into a trance, loses consciousness, and starts to tremble all over his body. Sometimes he jumps upon the bench in magical agitation and begins to act like a madman. Immediately his assistants and persons chosen for this purpose from among the onlookers start holding him, for his behavior indicates that he is fighting evil spirits that are trying to take possession of him.

It may happen that in this struggle he throws himself to the ground and thrashes about in such a way that he cannot be restrained anymore, and he then rolls through the door into the stables. Soiled from head to foot with the dung of the domestic animals, he convulsively utters disconnected words, for the spirits are speaking through him. Every word is given the fullest

[1] [see cat 116, p 287 - ANALYST]

/179 cont./

● 756 787 attention and is interpreted. It is a shorter or longer time before he again awakes from the trance state, depending on how hard a struggle is required in his fight against the evil spirits. In easy cases, he immediately returns to consciousness, but it may take a day or longer before he awakens. It is striking that, even after the shaman has regained normal consciousness, he remembers everything that the spirits said to him.

[782] Aside from the sacrifices for the spirits that have to be made in the presence of the shaman, there are five things included among the obligations of the shaman: 1. as in the case [755] described, he has to cure sicknesses by exorcising the evil spirits to whom their origin is traced, 2. he must predict the future, especially with regard to whether some work that has been undertaken will be accompanied by success or misfortune, 3. he interprets omens and 4. dreams which a person is unable to explain [789] himself, 5. he must make charms and sacral signs (Ill. 97). 1 [755] As compensation for his work, he receives a piece of silver for [614] cases of serious illness, but if the sick person is a member of the [465] sib of the shaman, nothing is paid. The prediction of the future or of success or misfortune costs only about a quarter /180/ of this amount, as does the interpretation of omens. In lieu of silver money, food, opium, cloth, and the like may be given.

123 755 As was briefly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Lü, the third son of the chief Tsin Tsai, was sick. His worried father complained to me that Lü, his good son, had lost his soul, which had left his body. The shaman had already tried twice to call it back, but in vain. I heard the plea for help in the words of the distressed father, and moreover I knew that several days before Lü had followed a wounded gaur deep into the malaria-ridden lowlands and had even spent the night there. My diagnosis was therefore made quickly, and an examination confirmed my suspicion. Lü had tropical malaria. I was equally anxious to help the worried father and to justify the confidence of the chief, which he was at the same time. Moreover, I did [126] not want to lower the shaman's prestige by my success, but

1 [see cat 116, p663 - ANALYST]

/185 cont./

755 corners. Then the chief burns the sacrificial money again in order to drive out the evil spirit in this way also.

Another hour passes without anything special happening. During this time the shaman continues his conjurations and rhythmical movements without interruption. Then at last he removes the black cloth from his face and with this the conjura- [787] tions come to an end. He is bathed in sweat. Nevertheless he picks up the oracle horns in order to ascertain whether the ceremony has had the desired result. Next he passes his magic rattle around the light and around the incense candles on the altar and thanks his teacher-spirit and the assistant spirits. With the patient between them, the chief and the eldest son step before the altar, bow to the ground with folded hands, and thank the spirits and the shaman for their help.

[123] I subsequently actually cured the patient with plasmochin and atabrine.

756 Other authors have also mentioned the shaman and his activities according to their own attitudes and the regions visited. Baron von Eickstedt, for instance, impressively describes a ceremony with a shaman, and Savina (1) remarks on this subject:

1. II, p. 257.

[596] "In everyday life the head of the family maintains relations with the world of spirits. Only on solemn occasions are the shamans called in. They are at the same time priests, physicians, magicians, soothsayers, and diviners. As priests they appear 756 only at burials and in time of war. When someone dies, the 764 txi neng is called immediately. When he arrives, he dresses the corpse and arranges everything in the house: the time when people are to weep or play the creng (mouth organ) or beat the [782] drum. He also says how many buffalo or cattle are to be slaughtered. He recites before the dead the old traditions about the creation of human beings, death, ascension, /186/ and judgment. When the ceremonies are over, the corpse is put on a bed of state outside. At the moment when the last buffalo is slaughtered, the shaman takes the rope and places it between

/186 cont./

756 [764] the hands of the dead." (In this connection I refer to my remarks concerning this author and the objectives of his investigation in the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales," pp. 302-303.)

Lajonquière (1) gives the following portrayal: "Among the

1. II, p. 313.

Meau there are some individuals, half priests and half sorcerers, without a cult or ordination, who, however, ascribe to themselves [787] supernatural powers. They close their eyes and release their soul from the mortal body so that it may make contact with the spirits in the depths of the earth. As special clothing, the sorcerers merely have a white veil which they put over their faces before the ceremony. Music and dancing play an important role in this, but it always ends with an elaborate feast."

[114] According to the data of the various authors cited and my own observations, an error must be involved when Dhuraratsadorn (2)

2. Page 172.

writes that the Meau have no priests at all. At any rate, I could find a very clear separation of the activities of the male and female shamans from those of the other Meau, who, to be sure, also perform various magical procedures. Among them there is 789 the hunting magic, which is practiced by successful hunters both 224 among the Akha and the Meau without requiring the help or 223 the presence of the shaman. For this magic the hunter must smear the front part of his crossbow with the blood of the slain animal. He then glues a few hairs or feathers, depending on whether a bird or other game is involved, to the blood and now believes that he will soon again be equally successful with the 756 weapon. It is possible that such magical procedures which are feasible for every Meau have led to the view that this people has no individuals who can be regarded expressly as priests, that is, shamans. On the contrary, the activity of the shamans is very extensive.

/187 cont./

755 789 entrance to the house the shaman cut the throat of the young dog (Ill. 101)[1] and caught the blood in leaves. With the blood he then drew a cross on the backs of the head of the household and each of the other members and smeared some blood on the door [787] posts. /188/ Finally, he once more threw the oracle horns and burned a quantity of spirit-money as a sacrifice.

● 756 787 [776] On another occasion we were able to observe the activity of a female shaman. This involved the invocation of the father-Mother spirit, who, as soon as the rice is ripe, according to the Meau, moves away in order to be ready for the New Year's festival. Now this spirit had supposedly returned and would be asked by the female shaman to bring blessings to the occupants of the house. Outwardly there is little difference from the activity of a male shaman. It was striking to us that the female shaman used not two, but four oracle horns. At this ceremony, too, there was a struggle with evil spirits. Whenever the female shaman in her exertions jumped upon the bench to indicate that an evil spirit was present, the head of the household scattered maize and his wife spat water in the four directions. Despite the fact that everything was carefully observed and care was taken to scatter the kernels and spit out the water in the prescribed way, the evil spirit would not yield. Finally, the head of the household seized the spirit-sword hanging on the wall by the altar and stuck it into the ground in front of the altar. The female shaman had actually fallen into a deep trance and had to be awakened very laboriously by being pounded on the back by the head of the household after the conjuration was over.

756 789 Besides this kind of activity, obviously recognizable as a priestly performance, there falls to the shaman, but not exclusively to him alone, the making of spirit-paper (Ill. 84, 85)[2] and thus spirit-money. Moreover, the shaman is obliged to make certain amulets and talismans, although many other Meau know how to make various such means of protection against the evil spirits. The ingredients are obtained from flowers and plants. Small triangular cloth bags are filled with the mixture. Such amulets are worn on a string around the neck or attached to the silver neck-ring itself.

[1] [See Cat 116, P666 - ANALYST]
[2] [" " , P598 - "]

/188 cont./

789 [753] Since there is an inclination to trace sicknesses back to the influence of evil spirits, all the means used against them are also used in the fight against sickness. As has been described in the chapter, "Life in the Community," section on "Naming and Admission into the Family Community," for protection against /189/ sickness, strings are tied around the children's wrists, and metal rings can also be used for this. The effectiveness of many amulets pertains at any given time to a certain spirit, but magical agents with a polyvalent effect, so to speak, are also made. Such magical agents are brewed out of the most effective substances known against certain individual spirits and therefore have a general effect. For instance, one takes the root [824] of a certain kind of mimosa and adds arrow poison, pandanus leaves, and the root of a certain plant cultivated for this purpose in the rice fields, but whose name I could not discover. Since each of these agents is in itself protection against certain spirits, the effect of the mixture, according to the conception of the Meau, is comprehensive.

[823] Besides such vegetable protective agents, copper plays a special role among the metals in the making of such agents, since magical properties are attributed to it. Objects made of this [301] metal, such as rings for the neck, arms, or legs, are supposed to protect one against evil spirits. It is therefore primarily the children who are provided with such magical ornaments by their worried parents.

[756] The shamans, too, usually make their amulets out of the substances named and sell them at a small price. The view is not, however, that spirits are conjured into such amulets, but only that these amulets are protection against evil spirits. There [776] is, for instance, no spirit of arrow poison, of mimosa, or of the other substances mentioned; they merely have a warding-off and thus protective effect. Savina (1), too, mentions the amulets [714]

1. II, p. 257.

and reports that in time of war some that are supposed to make warriors invulnerable are made.

/189 cont./

787 [756] The Meau ascribe extraordinary importance to various omens, whose number is almost legion. There are many omens that only the shaman knows how to interpret, while a great number is known to every Meau and he can interpret them himself and act accordingly. For example a field is abandoned if bad [241] omens appear, an /190/ accident occurs, or the crop fails, since one concludes from this that evil spirits are in it.

243 787 When a rice field is laid out, a person must be specially careful, and he does not by any means limit himself to the sacrificial festivals for the protective spirits described above, since the welfare of a Meau community depends upon the yield from the fields. The Meau live on the field products and the [433] booty from hunting; their dwellings and villages stand in the midst of forest areas. Hence it is not surprising that the behavior [825] and the presence or the absence of various animals are believed to be omens. In the search for a suitable location no muntjac may be seen or heard. If this obstacle is met successfully, it may still happen that when the first tree is felled, a turtle or a snake [776] appears. In that case only swift flight can save one, for it means that the dwelling of a spirit has been destroyed.

342 787 825 The omens which have to be heeded when a house is built are equally numerous. One may neither see a snake nor hear the "shriek" of a muntjac. Even the cry of a black squirrel is a bad omen. If none of these bad omens were noticed and if no bird dropped his excrement on the site chosen, the house and its occupants will be blessed.

224 787 825 In view of all this, it is self-evident that the Meau hunters, too, have absolute faith in the omens with which they are familiar. If one sets out to hunt and sees a snake or a muntjac, the undertaking is immediately called off. If one nevertheless wanted to proceed to hunt, he must expect to be killed by a wounded buffalo or elephant.

The muntjac plays an important and always unfavorable role. Merely its "shriek" is enough; the hunter who hears it believes that he cannot expect to bag any game.

/190 cont./

224 If the hunter tracks a wounded animal and, while camping
787 at night, hears the cry of the large black squirrel, he assumes
825 that the game has died in the meantime. If a spider spins its web over the place of a hunter's fire, he infers from this that he will soon bag some game.

787 It is regarded as a bad omen when a bird alights in a camp
825 /191/ set up in the jungle. If the bird should perch on the tree under which one is resting and if, in addition, he is hit by its droppings, this is regarded as the most unfavorable omen imaginable. Strangely enough, omens are not linked with the conspicuous and common hornbill, whose plaintive call astonishes every stranger, even if he has not yet seen the grotesque appearance of the bird, and which plays an especially important role among head-hunting peoples. Monkeys, lizards, frogs, and fish likewise have little significance among the Meau, and heavenly [821] phenomena, too, are not connected with omens. Similarly there 754 are no practitioners of black magic among the Meau, although 829 the concept is generally known. For instance, it is believed that among the neighboring peoples in the valleys, especially among the Chinese and Lao, such magicians who are able to do harm to human beings are very common.

787 The art of soothsaying is also known to the Meau. The belief is that it is neither inheritable nor can it be taught, but that it simply depends on the will of the spirits which person is endowed with this faculty. And there is no means by which the will of the spirits can be influenced in this respect.

Great importance is ascribed to dreams since it is assumed -- as has been said -- that in sleep the soul goes wandering and therefore dreams are nothing but the experiences of the soul while a person is asleep. The interpretation of dreams is also the [756] business of the shaman, but, as in the case of omens, there are some dreams, too, that every Meau interprets in the same way.

[763] In general it is assumed that one's parents will die if he
[171] dreams that he is losing his teeth. In this connection it is interesting to note that the idea of a sinister meaning of a dream in which teeth play a role is also found among the Lao and Chinese, as well as in Europe.

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/201 cont./

A 787 825 "Before a Kaw builds his house, he throws an egg into the air and observes where it falls. He builds his house on this spot. When it is finished, the Kaw scrutinizes the liver of a pig."

A 313 824 789 The same author (4) also made the following observation:

4. Page 114.

"When the Kaw have felled a tree, they put a stone on the stump; evidently, they thereby want to relieve themselves of responsibility; the tree spirit should now molest the stone and not the people."

d) Cult and Taboo

M 782 776 Among the Meau, the bisexual high Father-Mother spirit, the various teacher-spirits and their assistant spirits, the good spirits in general, as well as the ancestors, have cultic connections. On the other hand, no regular cult is devoted to the evil spirits.

M [755] Sacrifices are offered to them only occasionally, chiefly in case of sickness or if one cannot avoid approaching their abodes, for instance, in the jungle.

Sacrifices are offered in order to make the ancestors and the good spirits favorably disposed. For protection against the harmful deeds of the evil spirits, one turns to the good spirit /202/ /Figs. 41-52 appear here/ /203/ whose sphere of interest he fears is being invaded by the evil spirits. If some damage was done to the fields, for instance, one would not turn to the teacher-spirits or the assistant spirits of the smithy.

M 776 [778] One tries to protect himself beforehand against the influence of evil spirits through the use of amulets. Among these there are the spirit-swords, carved out of wood, which, provided with simple line drawings made with charcoal, are hung over the entrance of every house in order to prevent the entry of evil spirits (Figs. 53 and 54).[1/4] If in spite of all these precautionary measures

M [782] [756] evil spirits have entered, sacrifices are offered to them, but in addition one tries to exorcise them through the mediation of the shaman with the assistance of the good spirits.

1/4 [See cat 116, p 287- ANALYST]

/203 cont./

782 [516] One turns to the appropriate deity by means of prayer, which, however, might better be called invocation. One squats or kneels on one leg and puts the hands at chest height with the palms together. When invoking the high Father-Mother spirit, one looks toward heaven and lifts his folded hands in this direction; when invoking other spirits, the ancestors, for instance, one looks at the altar dedicated to the one invoked. In this position [788] and with simple words one informs the deity concerned of his [756] wish; prayer formulas are unknown. The shaman, too converses [787] with the spirits as with human beings; there is neither a special spirit-language nor special magic formulas.

788 The Meau are also familiar with benedictions, and the person of higher rank pronounces his blessing upon the person lower in rank. Thus, the chief blesses his subjects, the shaman his fellow-tribesmen, the father his children. The person pro- [516] nouncing the benediction folds his hands in the manner described, stretches them first over the head of the person to be blessed and then up to heaven, and at the same time invokes the Father-Mother spirit, whom he beseeches to bring good fortune to the protégé, to grant him a safe journey, or, in short, to bless the undertaking.

769 As was already pointed out, the Meau erect places of worship 776 which are regarded as the principal abodes of the spirits and are 782 dedicated to them. In general, sacrifices may be offered to the [778] spirits and to the ancestors only at these places of worship erected for them. The ancestors, for instance, grant protection against the revenge of evil spirits. For this, however, one must explain to them what the /204/ situation is. If one meets an evil spirit in the bush, he runs home as fast as his legs will carry him, in order to offer a sacrifice to the ancestors, who otherwise would not know what has happened and therefore would be unable to help. Then one would be helplessly exposed to the revenge of the evil spirit.

778 Aside from the ancestors, every Meau builds places of worship 776 and, to be sure, altars (Fig. 41 to Fig. 44), for those spirits with whom [782] he stands in a special relationship and to whom he sacrifices regularly because he needs their protection and their help in particular.

/213 cont./

123 262 [164] woman showed that she was suffering from hookworms, which could easily be cured.

I have already mentioned the taboo which comes into effect, in case of a death in a village, for the village community as well as for the mourners and especially for the family whose member has died. Food prohibitions are not tied in with death, but after the death of a woman, the children and the widower have to refrain from sexual intercourse for one year whereas after the death of the husband, widows are subject to this commandment for only one week.

784 765 [262] [834]

834 846 Marabail (1) reports of the Meau in Tonkin that after the

1. Page 451.

birth of a child the parents may not have sexual intercourse with each other.

835 The incest taboo is observed very strictly among the Meau in Thailand. It is forbidden for young blood-relatives of the opposite sex to stand together or to look or smile at each other. Since, as I stated earlier, any Meau man to whom a girl offers a glass of alcohol views this, according to custom, as an invitation, it is strictly forbidden for girls /214/ to serve alcohol or even to drink to men against whom the marriage prohibition applies for them.

[273] [832]

533 461 784 [626] In the fields of the so musically inclined Meau, one does not hear singing during the work or during rests, because this would violate a taboo. It is believed to be certain that non-observance would bring a misfortune, that one of the workers would be hurt, either by a tool or by part of a falling tree.

784 [177] Just as the Meau in their cult practices do not in general want to borrow anything from the pertinent customs of the other peoples living around them, so are the many prohibitions of the Chinese unknown to them or ignored. On the other hand great significance is attached to every native taboo. Every taboo is in force for the entire life of the individual as well as for the whole tribe; the only exceptions are taboos that are limited in time, which are automatically lifted after the

[756]

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/214 cont./

M 784 [756] [626] [821] corresponding period has elapsed. Otherwise, however, not even the shaman has the power nowadays to lift or to modify a taboo. The people are convinced that non-observance, which would bring the punishment called for in connection with the particular prohibition, would be generally punished by the spirits and ancestors so that lightning would strike the malefactor and kill him.

A 776 782 [171] The cultic practices of the Akha are generally similar to those of the Meau, but quite different in particulars. The Akha devote a regular cult to all the spirits and ancestors, with the exception of the god of heaven, "ɤ̆dŏ̆dŭchŏ̆," and the spirit of the world. The god of heaven, it will be recalled, remains excluded from the regular cult, because in the view of the Akha he dwells above and below the clouds, all the other spirits are his subjects, and therefore he, of course, partakes of all the sacrifices offered to them. As has also been stated, the creator of the world, "yăbĭdęlăhăt," about whom I could learn only vague ideas, is likewise offered no sacrifices, but I was unable to obtain more detailed information on this.

A 782 The Akha, too, view the sacrifice as a means of making the spirits and ancestors favorably disposed toward them and likewise use invocations to establish contact with the spirit concerned or the ancestors during the sacrifice. In contrast to the

A [516] Meau, however, the Akha do not assume a definite position while uttering their prayers. /215/ Some may be seen bending one

A [788] knee, others squat, and still others stand. Set prayer formulas, here again in parallel with the Meau, are also unknown among the Akha. One turns to the spirit with ordinary words and explains the matter to him in detail. Such prayers or invocations are always associated with the offering of sacrifices, which, however, in comparison with the Meau, are relatively rare.

/Fig. 56 appears here./

A 782 778 [24] The sacrifices are usually offered at the presumable abode of the spirit concerned, if special sacrificial places or little temples have not been erected for this by the Akha (Fig. 56). For example, before clearing is begun, a small temple abode is erected for the field spirit, yămyătsă, and sacrifices are made

39: Bernatzik--307 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
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/226 cont./

272 539 574 One of my informants told me a legend that explains the origin of the prohibition against drinking milk. At the same time it shows how highly important hospitality is regarded among the Meau, since its neglect is punished so severely:

"In olden times there lived a Meau who had seven wives. The chief wife was a Meau, the first secondary wife, a Haw, that is to say, a Chinese, and the other secondary wives were all Meau. Each of these wives gave birth to a son. One day, an old man came and asked for milk. He first asked the chief wife, and then the other Meau wives, but they all refused him. Finally, he turned to the Haw wife, and she took pity on him and gave him milk. When he left, the /227/ old man said: 'Oh, you Haw woman, you have a good heart. Therefore you Haw people may eat and drink whatever you like. In the future, however, the Meau shall be forbidden to drink milk.'"

539 ●756 Concerning the origin of the shamans, I was able to learn various details, which Savina (1), however, has taken down in

1. II, p. 209.

greater detail and more fully among the Meau in Tonkin:

"There once lived two men, Ngionggi and Xigi. One day when they were on the seashore they saw an island in the middle of the waves. On this island a crane was sitting on a nest with eggs. The two men took these eggs, pierced and emptied them, and put them back in the nest. When the crane saw that they had been pierced, it filled them with a special substance and hatched them out after forty days. When Ngionggi and Xigi saw this, they took some of the substance, because they thought that they could arouse the dead with it. They tried it first on the corpses of an earthworm and an ant, which immediately came back to life. They then went into a village whose chief had just died, and they brought him back to life. Loaded with presents, they traveled on and everywhere they raised up the dead. One day they decided to return to their families. Their wives and children, however, had died a long time ago, and they were unable

/227 cont./

539 to revive their dry bones. Mad with grief, they threw their
• 756 medicine into a cave and decided to die. Their countrymen tried in vain to prevent them from doing so. They did not succeed, but Ngionggi and Xigi consoled them by saying: 'After our death shall appear to some of you in your dreams in the shape of a virgin and teach you how to cure the sick. Consult these men when you are ill, and you will recover!' Since that time the Meau consult their shamans whenever they are sick."

539 I could not find any legends that tell of the historical
114 development of the Meau, nor have other authors, so far as I know, published such legendary material. Only Von Eickstedt (2)

2. II, p. 52.

recorded a legend of the Meau, and a similar version is also reported by Leuschner (3). Von Eickstedt asserts that it is a Man

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3. Page 44.

legend, which, however, is also claimed by the Meau:

/228/ "The Chinese emperor Ti Ku (about 500 B. C.) is said to have promised the hand of his third daughter and the advantages accruing from this to the one who would rid him of his most dangerous enemy, who would kill the latter and bring his head. A yellow dog by the name of Pan Hu heard this, accomplished the deed, and married the princess, who bore him six sons and six daughters. From these stem the various Man tribes. A division of the realm took place, according to which the Chinese were given the valleys and the Man the mountains."

Von Eickstedt correctly concludes that when the Chinese, during an attack by presumably northern warlike nomads, turned to the neighboring mountain peoples for help and the latter actually defeated the enemy, the chief of the mountain peoples was given a daughter of the imperial house along with the political advantages connected with it.

/233 cont./

A M 164 cases. Frambesia occurs occasionally, cholera more frequently. The last epidemic known to me occurred among the Akha in 1933 and brought severe losses with it.

Furthermore all kinds of cold-sicknesses are common, including pneumonia; on the other hand, I could not find any tuberculosis. Lajonquière (2) also reports on the causes of these

2. II, p. 306.

cold-ailments, and Abadie (3) confirms his data:

3. Page 159.

"When the wind blows and on winter evenings sweeps in icy gusts through the poorly closed walls, when the damp air cools A off to about zero, the whole family presses around the hearth, M in which a few pieces of wood glow. All night long they sleep [513] in the ashes, one leaning against the other. This is the time when the aged and the very little ones catch their bad coughs, which follow them to their graves."

/234/ In keeping with the greater dirtiness of the Meau, head lice and body lice are considerably more numerous among them than among the Akha. The Meau also suffer from severe forms of scabies in connection with dermatitis. Caries are likewise common only among the Meau, as is pyorrhea, which I could not find among the Akha.

A M 753 776 M 755 [756] [769] As I have already pointed out in the chapter, "Religion," the section on "Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens," some of the illnesses befalling them are traced back by the Akha as well as the Meau to the work of evil spirits. In such cases, the Meau turn first to the ancestors for help, and, if they cannot help, to the bisexual high Father-Mother spirit. Then one attempts to drive out the evil spirits with the help of the shaman, who often actually is skilled in medicine, even in our sense. The course of requesting the help of the ancestors and spirits is chosen only in case of sicknesses for which no remedies are known to the Meau, against which they are helpless, and which they regard as dangerous and incurable on the

/246 cont./

428 [597] blood relatives, as well as adopted brothers, receive no share in the inheritance as long as the direct heirs named are present.

[756] [622] [634] Aside from possible fees, if the shaman has been asked to officiate at the burial, he, as well as the village chief, formerly the great chief, receives none of the estate. The distribution of the estate takes place under the supervision of the principal heir, who also receives the clothing of his deceased father.

[562] [596] Even if there are no sons, but daughters are present, they are still excluded from the inheritance. In this case, the oldest brother of the deceased moves into his house as the chief heir and new head of the large family, takes over all the property of the deceased, and provides for the girls as though he were the only son. In practice this situation probably never [597] happens, for the head of a large family to whom daughters were born, but not sons would have adopted a boy in time. The latter would then marry one of the daughters and become the sole heir. /247/ Dhuraratsadorn (1) reports in a similar vein:

428 562

1. Page 169.

"Girls receive nothing, unless the deceased is survived exclusively by unmarried daughters. If the deceased is survived only by married daughters, all of whom have left the paternal home, they inherit nothing at all, and the estate passes to the closest male relative. An exception is made if a woman and her husband [597] live under one roof with her parents (adoption). In this case the estate is divided between her and the son of the deceased. Her husband cannot inherit from his parents, since he has given up all ties of kinship with his natural parents."

428 [597] The situation is similar in case of childlessness. In such cases, too, the man would long before have adopted one or probably several boys, who would have the same rights as natural sons. If a Meau should die after he has lost all his sons, [596] which may happen in epidemics, the oldest brother of the [764] deceased becomes the principal heir, who moves into the house of the deceased, takes care of the funeral, and with whom the [589] widows remain as a rule. Nevertheless, in this, as in every other

/254 cont./

692 695 [634] [625] Capital crimes, as well as civil cases in which the defeated has lodged an appeal, are decided incontestably by the great chief. The appeals are therefore as follows: an appeal against the verdict of the village elder goes to the village chief and one against the latter goes to the great chief. In special cases the verdict of the great chief can be appealed to the popular assembly, as has already been set forth in the chapter on "Political Organization," the section, "The Popular Assembly."

695 756 [634] There is no appeal against the verdict of the popular assembly. In ambiguous cases the judge turns to the shaman and instructs him to arrange for ordeals /Ordale/. Such ordeals take place before the popular assembly; they also play a role in criminal law. For example, the following ordeal is customary for the conviction of a criminal. The shaman makes a large carrying basket of split bamboo, which he covers with the clothing of a man. Next he looks among the girls of the village for two virgins, and, to make certain that all necessary conditions for the aims of the ordeal are actually fulfilled, he prefers to select two girls who are still immature and who must hold the basket on two sides. Then /255/ the accused burns several pieces of spirit-money and begs the high Father-Mother spirit to appear and make known the truth. As soon as the basket begins to sway, it is assumed that the high spirit has arrived. With a loud voice the accused now asks whether the high spirit has arrived, and it is assumed that the spirit is in the basket and is influencing the actions of the girls as soon as the covered basket again begins to sway. Next the shaman calls the names of all the suspects, one after the other. If the basket sways when one of the names is mentioned, the question is repeated two more times. If the basket is seen to move again, the culprit is regarded as convicted. If he nevertheless continues to deny his guilt, the shaman asks the girls to point out the culprit. If they now tap him on the shoulder, his guilt is regarded as proved.

39: Bernatzik--355 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
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Volume Two

/259/ Chapter 13

Settlement and House Construction

A M 166 361 The Meau as well as the Akha of Thailand are seminomads who change their residence sites every couple of years. They decide on such a move, however, by no means lightheartedly or out of nomadic impulses, as Credner (1) intimates, but rather

1. IV, p. 70.

compelling circumstances induce them to undertake the indescribable labor of moving a village. The main reason for it is A M [241] [262] the exhaustion of the cultivable soil as a result of cultivating clearings without fertilization. Depending on the fertility of the soil, it yields rice, the principal food of the population in northern Thailand, for two to four years. After four to ten years, all the cultivable land in the vicinity of a village is exhausted, and the people must contemplate a move if they do not want to starve. Other important reasons are warlike events and legal A M [648] insecurity, especially in China, or the imposition of taxes that are too high, as in Burma or Indochina (see the chapter, "Cultural Change and Colonial-Ethnological Problems among the Mountain Peoples in Thailand," the section, "Attitude of the Various Colonizers").

M 166 361 [731] [756] [623] [622] The Meau also move their villages if epidemics have broken out or if the shaman predicts a misfortune for the village. Among the Meau the decision to move the village is made by the assembly of all the men of the village capable of bearing arms (see the chapter, "Political Organization," the section, "Popular Assembly). In the assembly, the opinion of the chief, as well as that of the shaman, carries great weight. The wish of the two is decisive, not theoretically, but in practice.

/265 cont./

592 621 is the shaman of the village. Personal name, Plai Tschau; family name, Sen Ku. He is a /266/ brother of the deceased 551 father of the chief. The housewife comes from the Meau village Muang Hu (north of Luang Prabang). Eight of her children died at a later age, presumably of malaria. Three of them 164 died only a year ago within one week, which indicates an 734 epidemic. The youngest son, 23 years of age, is completely paralyzed. He lives in the house with his young wife.

513 House 4: It has only one open bedroom for the entire family, and one for strangers. The father of the house is a son of the shaman. The housewife comes from the Meau village of Pu Kung; she has three boys and two girls. One child died.

342 513 House 5: The walling of the house is merely halved bamboo stalks. It has only one sleeping area for the father and the infant. The married son and his wife sleep on mats on the 551 ground. The father of the house is a White Meau with the personal name of Tschai Su, family name Tau. The housewife died a short time ago and five children have died; only the oldest son and an infant are living.

622 551 House 6: House of the village chief (see the ground plan, Fig. 63). Personal name, Pan Sung; family name, Sen Ku (the Lao call him Tsin Tsai). By his first wife, who died four years ago, he had 11 children, one of whom died. By his second, 587 present wife he has two children, two and three years of age. His wife brought seven children into the marriage. In addition, he 595 has in his house the cousin of the White Meau of house 5 as his secondary wife, but no children by her. Two married sons with wives also live in the house.

House 7: See the groundplan, Fig. 67. The father of the 551 house is a White Meau: personal name, You Wu; family name, Tau. He is the youngest brother of the father of house 5, that 756 is to say, the cousin of the third wife of the chief. The housewife is a White Meau and a female shaman. She had seven children; three adult sons died two years ago, one after another, 731 of cholera. The surviving members of the family therefore fled 164 to relatives in Nam Fa.

/324 cont./

291 [184] [554] [531] the women and the size and shape of the collar vary according to age and social position. He further maintains that sometimes, too, the clothing of the men is decorated with embroidery and colorful lacing, like that of the women. /Figs. 209-210 appear here./

302 [304] Tattooing, like body painting, is unknown among the Meau. The headdress of the girls and women among the Meau is completely uniform. The long straight hair is combed upward in the back and twisted into a knot above the forehead (Ill. 87).[2] Since it is regarded as especially beautiful to have as large a hair knot as possible false hair is often twisted into the knot (Ill. 59).[2] Young girls like to wear a wooden comb stuck [301] [412] in the hair knot (Fig. 209). To comb the hair, women as well as men use combs with an edge and central piece of wood and teeth of finely split little sheets of bamboo.

I could nowhere find among the Meau visited by me the women's custom of shaving the head as Lajonquière (3) describes

3. II, p. 309.

● [756] it. A single exception was the female shaman of a village. This woman wore her hair completely shaved under her turban.

[177] /325/ The headdress of the men is uniform everywhere. In Chinese fashion, they wear their heads shaved for a round spot about six centimeters in size at the back of the head (Ill. 80).[3] The remaining hair is long and is either braided into a tight queue, tied up in a knot, or worn loose (Ills. 52 and 54).[4]

301 [171] Compared with the other Chinese mountain tribes, such as the Akha, Lahu, Lisu, etc., the Meau wear few ornaments. Nevertheless, the solid silver rings, which are worn around the neck, arms, fingers, and feet, stand out in rich contrast from the dark-blue fabric of their clothing and the colorful embroideries. Quite generally, open, solid silver hoops are worn around the neck (Figs. 211 and 212), which vary in size, weight, and execution, depending on whether they are intended for children, women, or men. Sometimes several neck hoops

1 [see cat 116, p 620 - ANALYST]
2 [" " " p 448 - "]
3 [" " " p 595 - "]
4 [see cat 116, pp 365-366 - ANALYST]

/423/

Chapter 23

Trade

438 As is already clear from the preceding chapters, a
463 division of labor is only slightly developed among the Meau. Everyone undertakes the general tasks, and special talents are only secondarily cultivated and practiced. Accordingly, there
[441] are no "traders" among the Meau, and no carrying trade within the tribe. Even within the family community the producer is at the same time the seller of his wares. For example, the Meau woman who enjoys a special reputation as a batik worker sells directly her batik material produced in addition to her daily work, and likewise a boy his crossbow, or the smith his
[596] products. The head of the family disposes of things that belong to the family in common, such as the products of the field.

[614] Since each sib produces for itself almost everything that is necessary for life, the only things that come into consideration as trade articles within the tribal community are those made by means of the very special ability or knowledge of individual
[756] persons. The shaman, for instance, makes amulets of special
[789] efficacy; the smith makes guns, tools, knives, and ornaments;
[326] an especially good batik worker works in other houses for pay, and so forth.

463 Anyone who is outstanding as a result of such special
554 achievements occupies a privileged social position and is properly paid for his work by those who ask for it, but this is more an
[465] honorarium of recognition. Otherwise, people help one another,
476 for instance, if someone has run out of maize or lacks a tool. In such cases one is always able to turn to his neighbors, who are ready to help and who do the work when needed, even if they do not expect any payment.

439 The attitude toward the foreign traders, usually Chinese, is altogether different. In northern Thailand it is primarily western /424/ Chinese, called the Haw, who supply the Meau with wares that, to be sure, are not crucial, but nevertheless are of significance for the Meau. From these traders the Meau, as

/469 cont./

115 His unconditional reliance on the information from the spirits
156 by way of the oracle is characteristic of him. We also discovered
622 that prior to our arrival he had asked the spirits what our secret
123 intentions were. The information must have been favorable
[787] for us, since he decided to obey us unconditionally. /470/ I can well imagine, however, that if the opposite had been the case, everything would have been other but pleasant.

"Tsin Tsai carefully cultivates his fields and in addition is an excellent smith who is even able to forge guns and to melt and work silver. He knows how to make paper as well as to castrate animals. His real passion is for the hunt. Finally, he
● [756] also acts as shaman, questions the spirits, and offers sacrifices to
[757] the ancestors and spirits. He also, however, undoubtedly possesses medical knowledge, and the Meau come to him from afar in order to be treated by him. Without detriment to these activities, he discharges his duties as village chief and judge to the satisfaction of all."

762 Although the vitality of the Meau seems almost inexhaustible and they are very cheerful, suicides nevertheless occur. In three instances that I learned of, it was a matter of unhappily married women who had no chance of getting a divorce. In one case, a young man could not get along with his older brother who was acting as the head of the family.

53 The Meau are not especially good orators, but on the other hand are very talented lyrically as poets and singers.

177 In keeping with their great vitality, they are open to innovations if a thing does not conflict with their tradition, their religious prohibitions, or their experiences. They indeed cling tenaciously to their traditional attire, but, from what has been said, they may be regarded as quite adaptable. To be sure, Savina (1)

1. II, p. 188.

states: "During the course of his migration he (the Meau, note by Dr. B.) has seen among other peoples houses that were much more comfortable than his own. And yet it never occurs to him to build something similar." In my opinion, however, this does

39: Bernatzik--664 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947
AO1 Thailand
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/Between pp. 490 and 491/

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Ill. 99. A Meau shaman conjures up the spirits, in order to call back a lost soul.

39: Bernatzik--704 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/Opposite p. 522/

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Ill. 102. Exorcising evil spirits with a burning torch by the shaman of the Meau (right) and his assistant.

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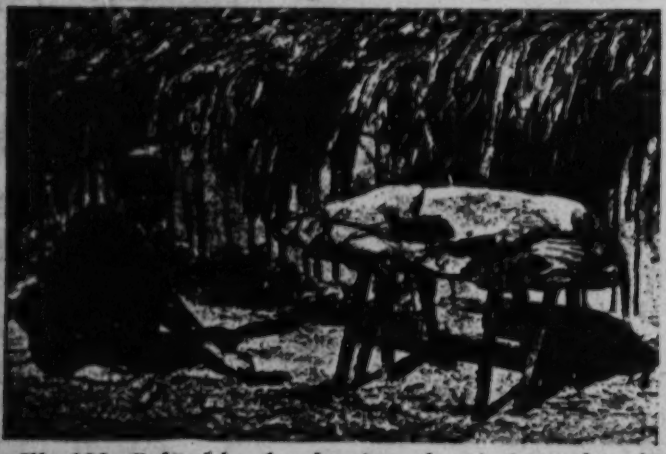

Ill. 103. Before the slaughtering, the pig is purchased from the spirits by the Meau by burning spirit-money under the snout of the animal.

/528 cont./

medicine that have to be overcome, it should be relatively easy to fight epidemics successfully, especially since almost all the diseases concerned offer no difficult problems for modern European medicine. The readiness to submit to European doctors is also stressed in the literature. Abadie, for instance, states(1):

1. Page 159.

"The Meau prize the free, expert medical treatment which the French doctors give them, with the assistance of native medical helpers, on their circuits among them."

With the help of well-chosen doctors, it will be possible to influence the beliefs and also to exert a decisive influence upon the shamans, for, in the eyes of the mountain peoples, the ability to cure diseases is equivalent to visible mastery over the evil spirits that call forth these diseases. Most of the shamans by far want only the best for the people for whom they feel responsible. It will therefore not be difficult to persuade them to intercede against moving the villages, if they are convinced that this would be to the advantage of their community.

The following event proved to me that in this respect natives whose trust has been won are easily influenced: One day, a Meau chief, in whose village I had stayed for some time, came to me in order to tell me that he and his fellows had become convinced by my many successful cures that my spirits were more powerful than their own. He therefore requested me to ask my spirits whether and when he should move the village. If my spirits approved, he would prefer not to change his residence during his lifetime.

The Thailand doctors and their medical helpers would have to gain the confidence of the mountain peoples. Since the Thailand national character is distinguished by tact and sympathy, the right path will soon be taken automatically. Nevertheless it is important to point out that in the medical treatment of the natives, the /529/ shamans and chiefs of the mountain peoples must always be enlisted. Usually these village authorities will let themselves be properly taught and

/IX cont./

252 256 the two millstone halves with each other is lengthened or shortened, it is possible to hull the rice or maize kernels or to grind them into coarser or finer flour.

243 [412] Ill. 95. Rice-harvesting knife of the Meau. It consists of a semicircular wooden handle with an inserted metal blade. A string over the back of the hand provides the necessary firmness. The photograph clearly shows how the implement is held. The ears are cut individually, row after row. Because of the manual dexterity of the Meau, the harvesting nevertheless proceeds rapidly.

Ill. 96. Part of the rice is hulled in the field. A hole carved in a felled giant of the primeval forest forms the container. The pestle is fastened to a crosspole and is set in motion when one steps on the shorter lever. The axis of the lever arm is fastened between the upright wooden posts.

Ills. 97-103. Religion and magic.

778 Ill. 97. Sacral sign that the shaman sets up in front of the doors of the houses as a sign of a holiday.

787 Ill. 98. Stick oracle. A number of questions are addressed to the spirits. Each bamboo stick signifies a question. All the sticks are bent in a special manner. The answer of the spirits is signified by the position of the upper edge of the bend.

755 787 [756] Ill. 99. Calling back a lost soul. The shaman (left) has thrown oracle horns (the tips of gaur horns) on the ground. Only if these come to rest in a certain way does it mean that the spirits are willing to appear. The magic rattle is on the bench in the foreground. In the background squats the father of the patient, beside whom, on the beam, is the patient, whose soul "has fled beyond the clouds."

[782] Ill. 100. Continuation of the ceremony from Ill. 99. The invoked spirits have given the order to dig a pit in the floor of the house and then to burn spirit-money. The lost soul of the patient is urged to enter the pit. It is then closed with a stone and the soul, it is believed, is caught.

/IX cont./

231 776 789 [775] Ill. 101. The dog is a beloved friend of the Meau. They believe that the soul of a dead dog plays a role in the other world, in the realm of the spirits, similar to the one it plays in the life of men. The throat of a newborn dog is cut so that it, as a guardian, will protect the house against sickness and evil spirits.

● 756 789 Ill. 102. Exorcising evil spirits by means of the shaman (right) and his assistant. The former is holding a burning torch, into which he throws gunpowder held in readiness by the assistant. The leaping flame, the smoke, and the stench are supposed to drive away the evil spirits.

231 782 Ill. 103. Before being slaughtered, the pig is purchased from the spirits by burning spirit-money representing the value of the animal under the snout of the animal.

Ills. 104-108. Houses and settlement.

343 243 482 /X/ Ill. 104. Work-hut in a rice field. In the left foreground, the typical Meau carrier.

342 [415] Ill. 105. Simple dwelling of the Meau, with walls and doors made of halved bamboo tubes. Beside the entrance stand long bamboo tubes with the partitioning walls pushed out, which serve as water containers.

353 [264] [354] Ill. 106. Flash-light photograph in the interior of a house of the White Meau. The family having a meal. In the background on the right, the mud hearth with the Chinese iron kettle. Household utensils hang down along the walls and from the ceiling of the storage loft.

622 [264] [352] Ill. 107. A chief of the Black Meau in his dwelling at mealtime. The furniture is peculiar, differing basically from that of the Chinese and showing a striking resemblance to the furniture of the mountain peasants in the Alps. In the foreground on the right, the oldest son; to the left, two daughters of the chief. Various kitchen utensils are hanging on the house wall.